

THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

EDITOR: D. HARRISON

Central Library, Manchester 2

VOL. 53. NO. 8.

AUGUST, 1960

MATTERS OF MOMENT

There are signs that a period of gestation in library affairs is coming to an end. We are at last faced with a concrete proposal in the form of a new syllabus and the same issue of the *Record* which gives the details of this syllabus gives also details of the L.A. Secretary's proposals for the reorganisation of the structure of the Library Association.

Most of us are actual or potential students at some level and the syllabus revision is therefore not only of supreme importance to the future of librarianship as a profession, but is also a subject on which each of us will have some opinion, an opinion affected naturally by different personal circumstances. On page 157 of this issue Jim Davey, A.A.L. representative on the Examinations Sub-Committee and the officer of the A.A.L. in closest touch with the negotiations leading to the new syllabus, comments on the proposals.

We have grumbled long enough about the need for syllabus revision; it is easier to grumble than to construct. None the less the A.A.L. will be examining the syllabus in September Council, and individual members will be making their views known both through their Divisional Committees and, we hope, through the pages of the *Assistant*.

The reorganisation of the Library Association is a problem of possibly even wider ramifications than the syllabus, and though it affects members less personally, it is of crucial importance to the Association of Assistant Librarians. Here again, A.A.L. Council will be closely considering the L.A. Secretary's proposals in September and perhaps again in November, depending largely on how quickly the attitude of the divisions can be ascertained.

Each member should read the July *Record* even more closely than usual and form his or her opinion on these vital matters. We must, however, emphasise the importance to A.A.L. members of two of the proposals concerning the reorganisation of the L.A.

First it is proposed that the right to vote within the L.A. should be restricted to Chartered Librarians and members with a specified number of years' service as librarians. We have spoken before of the necessity of having a profession with an authoritative professional voice free from the trammels of institutional membership and weight of uninformed numbers. The restriction to Chartered Librarians instead of those who have passed F.P.E. is further than the A.A.L. originally intended to go, but as the President said in his annual address, matters must be viewed in the light of the syllabus revision which envisages the end of the F.P.E.

The second suggestion which affects the average member closely is that membership of the A.A.L. should be restricted "to persons below the age of say, thirty." Here we have to weigh the advantage of having a

section which is more of a training ground for the younger member (perhaps we should say "even more"; it would be unfair to imply that the A.A.L. as constituted fails in this respect) against the disadvantage of losing the experience of able men, schooled in the affairs of the library world, capable of arguing the A.A.L. point of view to the L.A. and of organising for the benefit of younger members. There is indeed the danger that a new A.A.L. composed along these lines would be a diminished force in library affairs.

Most of us would wish to see an A.A.L. with more younger members playing a prominent part; many of us would doubt the possibility of bringing this about by the means suggested without losing something in the process.

The A.A.L. Publications Committee are to combat rising costs by producing the A.A.L. Guides to the examinations by "nearprint" methods—photographic reproduction of typed originals. While not suggesting that we would like to see all our publications cheaply produced, students will be pleased to hear that a continued supply of these useful guides is to be assured at reasonable prices.

We note that Walsall Public Library have joined the ranks of those who do not charge fines to old-age pensioners. Having accepted the Roberts Report's dictum that fines are reasonable, we should all be on the lookout for ways round charging them in deserving cases.

St. Marylebone reports the following readers' requests: "Shape of Ann," which turned out to be *Chez Pavan* by Richard Llewellyn, and *Love, sex and marriage*, to which was added the plaintive note, "I cannot get this from my bookseller."

As others see us

"Similarly, the librarian matters more than the library. Successful librarians are of necessity a curious race. They must have a nodding acquaintance with all the subjects touched on by their establishment, and be able to talk the appropriate languages, but their own specialist knowledge will have to be of booksellers and classification systems rather than of sciences. They need a vast, but rather parrot-like, memory, and a certain humility so that they are not depressed and frustrated by doing everything, as they must, at second-hand."

Noltingk, B. E. *The human element in research management*. Elsevier, 1959.

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1963

The proposed new syllabus, reviewed by Jim Davey, the Hon. Sales and Education Officer of the A.A.L. and A.A.L. representative on the L.A. Education Sub-committee.

The June *Liaison* and the July *Record* carried the news and details of a new syllabus, probably to be launched in 1963. By now you know that the F.P.E. is on the way out, that you will no longer be able to take the Registration "bit by bit," and that at last you can develop your subject knowledge (and its bibliography) to a very specialised degree.

The new syllabus is neither revolutionary nor objectionable; although there will be the inevitable protests and cries of "the Schools are running the L.A." It is a streamlined syllabus catering in a fairer way for all branches of the profession; it anticipates a class of librarian with higher educational attainments and is another step towards the inevitable division of library workers into "professional" and "non-professional."

Contrary to earlier reports, the Associateship will still come after passing the new Registration—not when all written examination is completed. The new Finals will bring the Fellowship, and here we see a return to work outside of the examination room as an option in one of the groups. There's talk too of further honours—a Diploma for an outstanding "piece of work"—but let us confine ourselves to details of the published revision.

Abolition of the First Professional Examination

Some will regret this, pointing to its "screening" purpose, its general introduction to professional disciplines, and its usefulness as a "sub-professional" qualification. Others will breathe a sigh of relief, citing other professions where anything before a meaty professional examination is considered unnecessary.

Its passing will reduce examinations in a subject at several levels. This, it can be argued, may not be a good thing. Better to progress gradually from elementary to advanced than to thrust a qualifying exam. at an unsuspecting and ill-prepared junior.

A higher minimum pre-entry qualification will take the place of the First Professional Examination. I will not repeat the reasons for this: Miss Paulin's statement in the July *Record* gives an admirable summary of the points presented by the Syllabus Sub-Committee. Remember that even with the introduction of the revised syllabus the First Professional Examination will remain for some time as a pre-professional examination: by passing either the present F.P.E. or the new P.P.E. you will become eligible to sit the new Registration examination—even if you do not have the necessary "A" or "Higher" levels.

The New Registration Examination

Before remarking upon the changes, let me say that I speak as an individual: the A.A.L. as a body has not yet considered the revised syllabus and in consequence no official statement can be published.

The new Registration is reduced in examination time from 21 hours to 15 hours. The first four papers form a "core" of subjects which are common to all libraries; the fifth offers you a choice of subjects from which you must choose one and show your knowledge of its "bibliographical apparatus."

Because of the integrated nature of the papers, the Registration

Examination will have to be *taken and passed at one sitting*, although references may be allowed by the Board of Assessors.

Will this drive students to the schools? I hope so, for only by whole time study can the new syllabus be covered adequately. I also hope that the schools will be ready for them: ready with expanded staff and accommodation, ready with a curriculum able to turn out a fully qualified librarian.

Still in a hopeful vein, I look for education authorities ready with adequate grants to lavish on the flood of student librarians, I look for a Burnham Scale for librarians in which recruits can see their financial reward, rather than the chopped-up gradings that bedevil our present salary structure. Meantime, let us hope that chief librarians will get enough recruits to look after the counters.

The New Final

Again a reduction in examination hours—from 24 to 18. Book selection disappears into the administration of types of libraries and into the subject papers. "Cat. and class." are no longer Registration hurdles but a Finals study, and for the first time we see papers on the book trade and "technical processes." Group C kills for ever literary criticism as a subject and allows the specialist to delve into the librarianship and bibliography of his chosen field.

Rightly the new Finals may still be taken group by group, and if you feel like obtaining additional specialist qualifications, then further papers beyond the minimum may be taken.

The initial problem will be the availability of courses for the new papers. No school can offer a range of classes covering all subjects in Group C, and students will have to grope their way through uncharted territory for some years to come. Here the A.A.L. can meet a challenge: can it cover the whole field and so supplement the courses offered by the colleges?

The A.A.L. and the revised syllabus

The A.A.L., like all Sections, Branches and other interested parties will have the opportunity of considering the new proposals and voicing opinions. Do not think that the proposals are irrevocable. Your Divisional Committee will soon be meeting to discuss the revision as a whole and the parts in particular: your own views can be conveyed to your committee and through the committee to the A.A.L. Council, and thence to the L.A.

The major issue will, I think, be the "one-sitting" Registration. Educationally the idea is sound, and the move towards the Schools is to be encouraged. But for domestic, financial and geographical reasons many will still be going it alone, and for them the way will be hard.

The end of correspondence courses?

For thirty years the A.A.L. courses have served students in all corners of the land and throughout the world. The Association will now have to decide its role in the future of library education. Can it offer integrated courses lasting three years to cover the whole of the Registration? Will many students embark on this prolonged method of preparation, and can we guarantee a team of tutors to coach the student through it all?

Or should we concentrate on short revision courses, either covering the complete syllabus, or for individual papers which will enable students

to master their weaknesses? Certainly at Finals level we can offer individual courses in the various groups. Some real co-operation with the Schools may be possible, some planned programme at national level could be organised, and all teaching agencies could be co-ordinated to cover the varying needs and circumstances of students.

If we continue as a tutoring body then nearly all our present courses will have to be scrapped and rewritten. Tutors will have to be re-assigned to the new papers and our whole organisation geared to the new syllabus. By 1963? I doubt it.

A.A.L. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

REVISION COURSES, SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER, 1960.

A limited number of REGISTRATION and FINAL courses will be available to run from September to December. These short period courses are reserved exclusively for those students who have already sat the examination in the subjects required. Overseas students are ineligible.

The closing date for application is 25th August, or the seventh day after notification of the summer results, whichever is the later.

FULL LENGTH COURSES, NOVEMBER, 1960—NOVEMBER, 1961.

Application for F.P.E. REGISTRATION and FINAL courses beginning November, 1960, must be completed and returned by 30th September. Full particulars of the courses offered are given in the current edition of the *Student's Handbook*.

FORMS, FEES AND ENQUIRIES.

Requests for application forms must be accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes and should be sent to the A.A.L. Hon. Education Officer, Mr. J. S. Davey, F.L.A., 49, Halstead Gardens, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21. The fee for each course, both revision and full length, is £3 10s. 0d. Students outside Europe taking full length courses are charged 10s. extra for each course.

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The A.L.A.—Its Maintenance and Profit

by Philip C. Clements

St. Albans College of Further Education

This is the last of a series of three articles which together comprise an examination of the Associateship of the Library Association as a professional qualification. The qualification, it must be remembered, is the first recognised by the general public, and the concrete basis for the librarian's future career, for among other things it will provide him with that all-important, formative, first professional post. This particular article can be described as one of divergence without digression, and will discuss the maintenance of the A.L.A.

When the present examination routine was planned, it was hoped that librarians entering upon it would naturally and automatically proceed from the Registration examination and the A.L.A., to the more austere and searching Final examination culminating in the F.L.A. Statistics show, however, that somewhere along the line, co-ordination has broken down, and the plans have gone sadly adrift, so much so that it has been decided to abandon the entire examination routine and replace it by an entirely new one. The latest figures record that out of a total of 4,937 Chartered Librarians, 3,390 are Associates and only 1,547 Fellows, and in the ten years from 1950-1959, 2,995 registered as Associates and only 616 were registered as Fellows. Something indeed is sadly wrong if in ten years only 616 librarians have completed the examination routine, a position which leaves no cause for consolation, but only a gigantic question-mark and an A.L.A., the significance of which is increased yearly, as so many fail to venture beyond it.

The reasons for this pitiful wastage are too diverse and too inherent in the deficiencies of the entire examination routine to allow detailed examination here, but a few of them may be noted in passing. First and foremost it is because the present Registration examination is such an infuriating and tiring hotch-potch of a white elephant that by the time the candidate has passed through it, he is too exhausted to face a sad repetition of the procedure on a slightly more protracted scale, while at the same time devoting much of his energy to a responsible position gained with his A.L.A. Secondly, apart from full-time courses at library schools for which Associates seem hardly able to afford either the time or the money at that stage, courses of preparation for the Final examination seem either entirely inadequate or pedantically depressing. Thirdly, because of the paucity in the number of executive positions, many librarians do not consider the effort to progress worth their while and are content to remain on the crowded lower rungs of the ladder. Lastly, many librarians are women who are content to remain at the A.L.A. stage, because of the possibility of an impending resignation.

What are we then left with? A mass of Associates going quietly about their daily rounds, most of whom just as quietly fall into a state of *professional* stagnation and inertia, taking their A.L.A. with them. It is largely because of this that librarianship is a dismembered profession in that its members are inactive and unaware that their qualifications carry insufficient weight, and being dismembered, the efforts of the pro-

fession to progress and expand are at the outset handicapped. Being an Associate of a professional institution, and more especially of one in which there are relatively so few Fellows, carries responsibilities for that person in many fields, responsibilities which if responded to should add immensely to the value of the qualifications for the individual member, and for the profession as a whole.

Such activities fall into two broad classes which may be described as "extra-vocation" activities and "academic" activities. The first class includes writing, public speaking and committee work, while the second class includes reading and research. Together they should improve the value of the A.L.A. as well as providing a firm starting ground for the Associate, if he feels at length inclined to proceed with the Final examination. By writing, it is meant that the Associate should contribute something to the professional press, particularly to the periodicals which abound in their dozens. At present there are far too many periodicals. It is probably because of this abundance of numbers, paradoxical though it may be, that so few Associates venture into print. On the other hand, some of those who do, appear to reflect both in style and subject matter, an attitude which many non-associates discarded on leaving school. In their writing Associates should set a firm and solid basis for the whole of professional literature, so breaking entirely from the "school magazine" attitude, and pointing the way firmly for their younger colleagues to follow.

In all aspects of "extra-vocation" work, attempts should be made to widen horizons and dispel insularity. In recent years this has been no more effectively achieved than by the literary journals of Hansom Books Ltd., in which on a grand scale, librarians by their contributions, have shown themselves to be bookmen to the world outside. Another example is to be found in the Shaw Society, whose editor is an Associate, while again in the journal of the book trade, the *Bookseller*, the monthly feature, "Library Issues," sets an example to the profession which it would do well to reciprocate, by taking a more active interest in other professions, trades and sections of the community which concern us.

Turning to "academic" activities, we are frequently told that as a profession we do not read. It is hoped that at least in the general field, this is far removed from the truth for a librarian who does not read is like a blood donor who suffers from anaemia. In the professional field, however, it is probably a very different story and the statement quite true. As a beginning an Associate would do far worse than to steep himself in the docile wisdom of Haines, in the sagacious wit of Savage, and in the contagious ebullience of Powell. As for research, this is badly needed, and it is gratifying to see that the Library Association is now awarding Research Fellowships. Associates, however, are debarred from them, which is to be much regretted. How much more beneficial it would be if *Associateship* were the qualification required for admission to Research awards, degree courses at the universities, major revision courses and courses of advanced study. Having pursued these the Associate would be far more fitted for his work and his profession would greatly benefit.

The A.L.A. ultimately rests on three pivots: attainment, retention, and maintenance. The way in which the librarian has attained the qualification will govern and dictate his professional awareness and attitude throughout his entire career. The way in which the A.L.A. is retained after qualification will determine the quality of his ensuing work,

and the *maintenance* of the qualification will prevent professional atrophy and mere somnolence. In the future there will be a great increase in the number of senior posts in libraries, particularly in the expanding field of science and technology. If Fellows continue to be in such a small minority, it follows that more and more high places will be occupied by Associates. This means that the A.L.A. must improve its status both inside and outside the profession; the time to begin this improvement is now.

Correspondence

Co-operation in Practice

Following the excellent reports of the Bangor Conference in the June issue, it may be salutary to recount a recent practical experience regarding the seemingly excellent idea of designing professional posters for sale and overprinting with local information to publicise certain Library services.

We recently had a silk screen poster designed and printed drawing public attention to *Which* and *Shoppers' Guide*. This was displayed around the town and led to a greatly increased use of these two publications. A paragraph was then placed in the *L.A.R.* by the Borough Librarian offering to give details of the poster to other Libraries and explaining that it could be supplied either overprinted with local information or supplied blank for overprinting, the rate being lower than we had to pay in the first instance when the poster was commissioned.

Few Librarians made enquiries, and most of those that did were chiefs of the smaller independent authorities so often the Aunt Sally of those who would have us all under the wing of the County Councils (none of whom asked for details).

What can we conclude from this experience:—

That most authorities already advertise and print their own posters?

That few Libraries are interested in advertising?

That few Libraries take *Which* or *Shopper's Guide*?

That few Chiefs read the *L.A.R.*?

That as a profession we are unwilling to use the ideas of others?

That the whole idea of co-operation in the matter of posters is doomed from the beginning?

Of course it could be said that it was a poor poster, or that it was too dear, but this letter is not about those who made enquiries and were thus able to form an opinion on these points, it is about those who never enquired and would never presumably support any similar co-operative publicity scheme as suggested at the Conference.

J. W. HOWES, *Walthamstow Public Libraries.*

Counter Duty

I cannot agree with the views expressed by Joyce M. Appleby regarding counter duty as a part of librarianship (June *Assistant*).

Miss Appleby states that the two true aims of librarianship are handling books and dealing with people, but seems to regard counter duty as the complete performance of these aims. I feel that she is reading far too little into "handling books and dealing with people" when her only concern is with the outsides of books, and her relationship with readers stops short at ticket queries and an insistence upon their observing rules.

Counter duty surely has its codes and standards, but it is high time that *librarians* stopped worrying about them, and left this to clerical or non-professional staff, concentrating instead on forging the link between each reader and his book by means of readers' advisory work, preparation of annotated bibliographies and reference work in general.

Counter duty as outlined by Miss Appleby can be carried out efficiently by any person of reasonable intelligence, without the need for it to be done by professional staff who thus confirm the public impression of librarians as book-stamping care-takers. Let us make clear the line between this administrative necessity and librarianship.

Obviously we have not managed to do so yet or the article upon which I comment could never have been written.

JOHN B. HEPWORTH, *Cumberland County Library.*

RANGANATCHY

'Twas Dewey, and the decet clas
Did point and co-ord in the skeme.
Al allyd by the Lake of Plas
Did analitics seme.

"Beware the catalog., my son,
The aded ents, the cards that catch.
Beware the L. of C., and shun
Facet-ious Ranganatch."

He took his Cutter blade in hand,
Longtime the Colon foe he sought.
So rested he 'neath a Simbol tree,
And lay awhile in thought.

But as in skeduled thought he lay,
The Ranganatch with laws in chain,
Galumphed at him in full array,
Out of the idea plane.

"One-two, one-two," and through and through
The Cutter blade he drove with weight.
Each facet cut, he left it but
A common isolate.

"And hast thou slain the Ranganatch?
Come to my clas, my skemish boy.
O Blissful day, D.C! A.A.!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas Dewey, and the decet clas
Did point and co-ord in the skeme.
Al allyd by the Lake of Plas
Did analitics seme.

ALLAN LEACH.

After "Jabberwocky."

Running a Staff Association

by L. C. Guy and T. M. Rogers

St. Marylebone Public Libraries

At a meeting held at St. Marylebone Central Library some months ago, a discussion took place on the various staff associations of those neighbouring libraries who happened to be visiting us on that night. It transpired that our own Association was somewhat original and that its history and activities might be of interest to other libraries. Here then is a brief history, the reasons why it came into being, what it has achieved and its work from month to month.

The St. Marylebone Public Libraries Staff Association is young, founded only in January, 1955. The staff numbers 54, only 12 of whom are based outside the Central Library, 6 at each of two branches. The local NALGO branch looks after the general welfare of the library staff as it does for all departments and provides the official link with the Council. For many years now the library staff has been well represented on this branch Executive Committee, being entitled to one representative for every 10 members of NALGO, and in addition it has often provided officers to manage the various sections from time to time. It can be seen therefore that the Staff Association did not come into being to undertake official liaison or indeed official matters at all, except in so far as it could provide a discussion ground for any such matters prior to asking the local NALGO branch to take action.

It was felt that a staff association could, however, properly organise our social life. Such little things as the collection of tea money, contributions towards leaving presents, small matters of comfort in the staff rooms and keeping in touch with ex-members of staff could be much better managed by a properly constituted committee. Curiously enough, our staff journal, *Ad Lib*, came first, the initial issue coming out on 30th October, 1954. Later, the committee managing this magazine became part of the staff association organisation, although retaining much of its independence.

An apparently odd method of electing the Executive Committee was decided upon in that each member at each centre, Central and the two branches, votes for a specified number of people, 5 at Central, 1 at each branch, and the persons with the highest total of votes became the elected Committee members. Thus, the 5 staff collecting the highest number of votes at Central automatically became the Central representatives on the Executive Committee. They remain representatives for one year, until the next election. If one becomes an officer of the association (Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, assistant Hon. Secretary or Chairman), and is re-elected to the Committee the subsequent year, then he or she is automatically excluded from the election for one year thereafter. This prevents one person holding office for more than two years and has proved a vital factor in maintaining a lively, ever-changing committee.

Subscriptions are collected on the basis of salary earned: up to £399, 2d. per week; £400—£599, 3d. per week; £600—£799, 4d. per week; £800 and over, 6d. per week (London weighting excluded). In addition, each member pays a levy of 1d. per week towards the cost of the staff magazine. Ex-members of staff may become Associate members at 2s. 6d. per annum, plus 2s. and postage for the magazine. Life membership is available for ex-members of staff on payment of three guineas. Added

to these rates is a weekly sum sufficient to cover the provision of tea, coffee, milk for those staff who indulge in all, one, or any combination of these. This makes a collection of between 3s. and 4s. 3d. each fortnight for most of the staff and this is recorded on stencilled slips for each member of staff, specifying their rate of contribution. Three collectors obtain the cash from their Central colleagues, and one at each branch does the same. From all this, the Hon. Treasurer handles something over £300 per annum and, of course, the Association found it necessary to open a Bank account.

A scale of assessing Association contributions towards leaving presents has been laid down, and it should be realised that this scale was only intended to augment the amount given and not to replace contributions made at the time a member resigned from the Council's service. The scale is:—

a member with more than 6 months but less than 2 years service—a collection only is made.

a member with more than 2 years, but less than 5 years service—15s. and a collection.

a member with 5 years service or more—30s. and a collection.

To a member with more than 15 years service, special consideration is given by the Execution Committee at the appropriate time.

The Association is very active socially and the annual programme includes some 15 events. These might be hikes in the spring or summer, dances, film evenings when a selected programme is shown on the library's equipment, theatre visits, river trips and coach trips. "Magazine" evenings have proved very popular, and on these occasions short poetry readings, discussions, play-readings and so on, take place. Debates have been arranged and quite often an evening is concluded by visiting a member's home, such as at the end of a hike or for firework parties and small dances. In fact, any sort of entertainment is provided and tried by the Executive Committee, and so long as a few attend, all is well. At each function taking place at the library, or its branches, refreshments are provided and a sum of 1s. 6d. per head is allowed to the small catering committee so that food can be provided.

The culmination of the year's programme is the Annual Party, to which all ex-staff are invited. Members donate cakes, tins of fruit and any other items desired, a sum of 2s. 6d. per head is collected, which entitles each member to bring one guest, and further guests may be brought at a very small extra charge on the occasions when the party has been held on New Year's Eve and finished with late night dancing. Between 100 and 130 staff and ex-staff regularly attend this event, which has assumed a character of its own and developed into a function long cherished and anticipated. We might well say that the whole year's work builds up to this party, especially as it is not the intention of the Association to accumulate a financial reserve but to spend almost all its income each year and to pass on to the next Committee only a working balance.

The association has however a more serious side. Five years ago help was given to two members to attend the A.A.L. Conference by paying their rail fares. Later, the Association asked the local NALGO branch to help, and for a year or two they paid the Conference fee and rail fare whilst our association provided pocket money. Then our NALGO branch asked the Council if they would help and for the past three years the Council has generously sent two representatives with expenses paid as for any authorised conference. The argument for sending two was

that youngsters would be encouraged to attend providing they had a colleague to travel and talk with during the week-end and would not feel shy or lonely amongst the large body of strangers. On another occasion, a member of the public who used the library and was grateful for its services, offered to pay for a young member of staff to attend the L.A. Conference, with full expenses. The Borough Librarian requested the assistance of the officers of the Staff Association in selecting a candidate, and a most enjoyable week was had by a member who might otherwise never have been.

Such then are the activities of our Association; its journal deserves a few words to itself.

Christened *Ad Lib*, it has tried to be literary and not parochial, to give the staff an opportunity to express themselves in print about matters other than their profession. Naturally, articles are bound sometimes to have a library flavour, but none is printed that concerns methods, problems or information about our work. This is adequately provided for in the *Assistant Librarian* and its more pompous companions. An issue appears every quarter and an author and subject index is maintained and published every third year. The editorship changes with each issue and may be placed in the hands of two people or even a group of people; for instance, a branch library is to edit and publish a current issue. There is seldom a shortage of material and a fair balance is kept between humorous and serious subjects.

So there we have an active, lively body, never at a loss for ideas, generous with its income and ready to tackle any problem which might be presented to it. The strongest point of this Association is undoubtedly the fact that every member takes some part in it, that it is not run or intimidated by any one person or group of persons, and that having established good relations with the Chief Officer, it can rely on a sympathetic hearing for any suggestions put forward and encouragement for any events planned for its wide and varied programme.

On behalf of our journal *Ad Lib*, we would add that other organisations are welcome to copies of each issue providing it is on an exchange basis, and we have suggested to the Editor of the *Assistant Librarian* that the A.A.L. might start a file of staff journals, or at least, compile a list of all those in existence.

The editor is at the moment aware of the following currently published staff association magazines in addition to "Ad Lib": "The Grapevine" (Notts County), "Bindery" (Islington), "Staff Guild Bulletin" (Lancs. County), "The Guildsman" (Glasgow), "Pharos" (Lanark County), "Counterspy" (Sheffield). He would be pleased to hear of, and if possible see examples of any others in existence and will be happy to compile a list of these magazines for any association which requires it.

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NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

Council Notes — 5th May

The Annual General Meeting which took place on the eve of Council was very much a formal affair. There were no resolutions, controversial or otherwise, and it fell to a prominent member of Council to inject relief by delivering a spirited attack on the Honorary Treasurer's accounting methods. There were those present who sensed a formal note even in this, in so far that they felt that the approach was not a new one. However, sixty-eight members attended, so at least twenty or thirty may have heard the peroration for the first time. The Meeting appointed Messrs. A. W. Ball, B.A., F.L.A., and W. H. Mabey, A.L.A., as Honorary Auditors for 1961, and settled down to hear an excellent address from Mr. A. C. Jones, F.L.A., our President for 1960, which members have since had the opportunity of reading in the *July Assistant Librarian*.

The Press and Publications Committee item relating that a hefty parcel of blocks representing the illustrations from the *Introduction to Historical Bibliography* had disappeared, was received without apparent response, but a quotation from a printer's letter relating to another work: "Thank you for the bad books. They have now been made good" did raise a smile. One member was heard to comment that we might find other titles to consign to this genius. New lamps for old indeed! A member criticised the Honorary Publications Officer for an unnecessarily detailed report and he was immediately followed by another who took him up on a point of close detail! This Committee gave every appearance of having put in a hard morning, but Council were not in an appreciative mood at this stage. A number of items on the agenda had had to be postponed. The member who protested that the item on Publishing Policy should not have been amongst them found some support, as this is a subject to which close attention will need to be given in the near future. Council authorised a special meeting of the Committee during the Summer Recess and the climate warmed noticeably with the pleasure felt by members at the long-awaited appearance of the booklet *Invitation and Opportunity*, which is intended to introduce our Association to potential new members.

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The report of the Education Committee was short. It contained the news that the list of Essential Textbooks had been well received and the British Council had requested a hundred copies for their overseas libraries. A proposal from the Greater London Division that Examiners' Reports be published was supported, although, since their contents are withheld deliberately from the L.A. membership at large, I think over-optimism would be unwise.

The most important business in the deliberations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee arose out of the comparatively innocent-looking item "Honorary Membership Secretary's Report." The startling fact presented by Miss Plaister that, of the 221 new members joining in March, 85 had not opted for Sectional Membership caused something of a sensation and the Committee had settled down to do something about it. The proposal that our attractive Honorary Membership Secretary should provide Invitation and Opportunity to new L.A. Members was received with innocence, although someone said later, after due reflection, that older members ought to be equally considered.

Council referred back to the Greater London Division a motion which failed to find a supporter sufficiently enthusiastic to speak for it. The Agenda now looked much shorter and hopes of catching trains began to germinate.

A brief report from the Honorary Secretary on the Library Association Public Relations Course followed.

Unfortunately, the promised digest of the Course from Mr. Higgins had failed to materialise, although the brief memoranda from the Honorary Secretary which had been intended as complementary to it had been circulated to Council. Earlier items on the Agenda had concerned the apparent slowness with which the L.A. had reacted to Sir Alan Herbert's "Authors' Rights Bill." This was due to failure of the L.A. organisational structure to provide for rapid consultation on topical developments between the Secretary and responsible officers. Mr. Barry needed close contact with members of the L.A. Council who could formulate urgent policies likely to be acceptable to the membership at large. This problem was likely to be solved by the proposed L.A. Reorganisation.

The Honorary Secretary baldly announced that our Honorary Editor had indicated that he did not wish to continue in that capacity after the December issue of the *Assistant* and that members should now think about nominating a successor. I will spare the Honorary Editor's blushes by refraining from eulogy here, but it should go on record that it is a responsible post and the occupant must be prepared for hard work and a steady grind.

Prospects remained bright for a reasonably early finish and lighter spirits prevailed. The report of the huge success of the Bangor Conference was received with due smugness all round, and the Honorary Assistant Secretary and Mr. Tully were invested with well-deserved thanks for the large part they and the N. Wales Division had played. Choosing the venue for the 1961 Conference, Council strongly favoured acceptance of the invitation extended by Devon and Cornwall. The Honorary Assistant Secretary asked that Divisions send him suggestions for a theme for the Conference as soon as possible, so if anyone has any bright ideas they should get into touch with their Divisional Secretary immediately. Following upon the appointment of the 1961 Conference Committee, the President had a brainwave in asking Mr. Oxley to give future convenors of the A.A.L. Conference the benefit of his knowledge and experience by setting down notes for their guidance. To this was added a plea from an old Conference Campaigner for the appointment of an Honorary Minstrel—it was wrong, he thought, that such amenities should be enjoyed by only a select few.

In reporting the meeting of the L.A. Executive Committee, the President warned that it was proposed that the right to vote within the L.A. should be restricted to members on the Register. There has been growing feeling within the profession that this will be a necessary step if the Association is to speak with a clear and authoritative voice. An extension was contemplated by which members with minimum service as librarians would retain their voting rights. A proposal of this nature will require careful consideration by the A.A.L.

The whole question of the new Examinations Syllabus and the Library Association Re-organisation will be put out to Branches and Divisions. Mem-

bers are urged to give sober and serious consideration to the proposed changes, to put forward their views to their Divisions and to be ready to support them by whatever personal steps they may be called upon to take.

JOHN HOYLE.

Anyone for Scarborough?

At the March, 1960, meeting of Council, verbal reports from Divisional Representatives were received regarding the position in their areas in respect of the co-operation extended to assistants who wish to attend the Library Association Conference. In view of the diversity of both individual approach and information gained, it was decided that Divisions should set down the results of their enquiries and submit them to the Honorary Secretary so that a summary could be prepared. Several Divisions had already decided that the position in their respective areas was either satisfactory or too delicate to probe, and seven Divisions (about half), submitted the data from which the following has been compiled. The Divisions were:—Bristol, Devon, Kent, Manchester, North Eastern, Wessex and West Midland.

From a total of 197 libraries circulated, only 29 failed to reply, including 7 who are now known not to have any members of the Library Association on their staff. The remainder who did reply may be categorised as follows:—

<i>No co-operation.</i>	<i>Leave with pay.</i>	<i>Not asked and/or would consider applica- tions on merit.</i>
78	52	38
(including 6 which would probably not grant leave if asked).	(including 3 which would probably grant leave, and 18 which grant full expenses in addi- tion).	(including 1 which will grant part leave).

Bearing in mind that the figures relate only to the L.A. Conference, I regard them as encouraging. It is quite clear that many more libraries than is generally recognised maintain enlightened policies in this direction. Staffing facilities and limited resources are frequently the genuine reasons for withholding from assistants co-operation in respect of attendance at the L.A. Conference which would mean an absence of several days. A very large proportion of the 78 libraries in the first column extend co-operation in the form of time off for professional meetings, hospitality to Divisions and facilities to attend week-end schools and conferences under Further Education and Training.

The position of the 38 libraries in the last column should give food for thought. It is astounding that so many as 34 of these libraries have never been asked for facilities. There is good reason to believe that many of these would consider sympathetically and upon merit any applications put forward. Personally, I find considerable understanding in this approach. The library which allows *part* of the necessary leave is an interesting example and, whilst this might not be the ideal arrangement, I do not think that it is at all unreasonable for a Chief or Com-

mittee to seek assurance that assistants who request leave with pay to attend professional gatherings do so for healthy reasons rather than reasons of health.

If the proposal that Chartered Librarians only may vote at the A.G.M. is put into effect, and the A.G.M. is retained as part of the Annual Conference, the position will be much clearer for those authorities which now grant leave. There will be good grounds also for the less generous authorities to reconsider their position if qualified members of their staffs can be spared from time to time.

JOHN HOYLE, *Hon. Secretary.*

Reviews

Bryant, E. T., *Music Librarianship: a practical guide.* J. Clarke, 1959. 45s.

The material for this book has been collected over a number of years with a thoroughness that is reflected in the printed volume. The need for such a publication is clear, for McColvin and Reeves' *Music Libraries* has long been out of print and no other systematic survey of the subject has been attempted. If a tone of personal conviction seems marked in the long chapter devoted to record libraries, this is no doubt due to Mr. Bryant's experience in establishing such a collection in his own library at Widnes. The other chapters in the first part of the book—administration, reference books and periodicals, cataloguing and classification—are based upon current English and American practice; perhaps the best testimonial to the author's enthusiasm and persistency is the fact that Henry E. Bliss not only commented at length upon the draft of the section on his own "Bibliographic" classification, but actually "indicated his intention of revising the music schedules in accordance with suggestions made."

It would be possible to cavil at the very extensive descriptions of reference books and periodicals only on the grounds that they would enable a student to pass an examination without reference to the originals! The second part, devoted to an annotated list of musical scores, must inevitably be a happy hunting ground for the fault-finder, but the selections rarely omit essentials and are sensibly graded to suit libraries of different sizes.

The point that collections of discs and scores should be parallel and complementary is made more than once; this is excellent advice, but occasionally the author's bias leads him to give recordings an authority which may seem sadly dated in a few years' time. In the section on anthems, for example, we are told to refer for particular titles to "the anthologies . . . recorded and issued on Columbia gramophone records." In a book of this size and scope something more authoritative is surely expected—for example, the list published in 1955 by the Royal School of Church Music. That Mr. Bryant's knowledge of music is both wide and perceptive is, however, abundantly evident in the annotations in Part II, where "safe" recommendations are pleasantly diversified by informed comments on lesser-known works (e.g. the piano music of Fauré).

The book is well produced, if one excepts the odd choice of sheet music titles on the dust-cover. There is a good index and a commendable absence of misprints, though one wonders what will be made of the model rubber stamp with instrumental abbreviations on p. 30, which contains three literal errors and is incorrectly set out. It is only fair to add that these trifling blemishes were perpetrated without consulting the author.

Coates, E. J., compiler, *The British catalogue of music classification*. Council of the British National Bibliography, 1960. 21s.

Students of classification, whether their interests incline to music or not, will welcome Mr. Coates's competent application of the Ranganathan principles of "facets" and the "chain index." Music, with its separable elements of performer, instrument and type of composition, readily lends itself to this form of analysis and there can be no doubt that the whole field is covered here with authority.

Users of *The British catalogue of music* will know that the scheme works well in bibliographical compilations, but it has been published, according to the Preface, "primarily in the hope that it may be useful to others with collections of music to arrange." Judged on this basis the alphabetical notation in its full extension may be thought unwieldy. A piano arrangement of children's songs from Austria (to take a random example from the current B.C.M.) becomes QPK/DW/GJ/AYEM.

If one wishes to identify specific facets—and there is a constant supply of such queries—it is doubtful if anything more exact could be devised. Is it also as simple as it is logical? It seems a pity, for instance, to use two letters—AY—for the common sub-division "collections." Surely one could have served? "Piano solo" is of course a very large class and is therefore allotted one of the simpler symbols. Solos for the Spanish guitar attract five letters, and if one has a tango for the instrument—no great rarity, after all—the notation is TSSPMHVR (without benefit of the oblique dividing stroke, the use of which seems to be somewhat arbitrary). Praise for this excellent classification must therefore be tempered by some hesitation as to its practicability if used to arrange music on the shelves as distinct from index entries in the catalogue. We await with interest the bold spirit who will first put it to a practical test.

L. W. DUCK

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